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RC
J658-98/Box 2
OADC/R

DDH NOV 51- Dec 52

25 February 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director, Intelligence

FROM: Assistant Director, CAD

SUBJECT: Your inquiry about the Biographic Register

1. What we're up against in the Biographic Register is a violent eruption of the eternal conflict between analysts and administrators. This conflict exists in every Office of CIA. Sometimes dormant, it breaks out explosively every so often. Before going into the details of this particular eruption, it is needful to define the general controversy as baldly as possible:

The Analyst Speaks:

"I'm an authority. I'm a specialist on Costaragua, and there isn't anybody around who knows as much about it as I do. The proof of that is that if CIA could have found somebody who knew more about Costaragua than I do, why then they'd have hired him instead of me.

"Why, if the President of the United States wants an estimate on Costaragua he asks CIA. And then CIA asks me. If that doesn't make me an authority I'd like to know what would.

"Costaragua's a mighty important country, too. A lot of people don't know that, but it's true just the same. The Soviets know it all right, and if we don't look out we'll wake up some morning and find out that World War III has started right down there in Costaragua.

"That puts a mighty heavy responsibility on me. You might say that I'm the man

The Administrator Speaks:

"These damn analysts make me sick and tired. Not one of them does an honest day's work, and yet they walk down the corridor with their nose in the air and act like big shots. It's an easy life.

"I wish I was an analyst. No I don't either. I was brought up to believe that a man who's paid to do a job ought to do that job, and not just sit around on his hands. Blamed if I wouldn't be ashamed to act like those fellows. Couldn't look myself in the face. No sir.

"It would be a good thing if somebody would put these analysts on a real production job sometime. They wouldn't like that so much. If they had to really turn out results the way my people do they'd either quit or have a nervous breakdown. It seems like the people who do the most work get the least pay, and those

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The Analyst speaks:

responsible for seeing to it that the War doesn't start down there. Because if only I can keep close enough track of what goes on down there, and warn the right people, maybe some way can be found to keep the Soviets from touching off the powder train.

"You'd think a man with that kind of responsibility would get some support in a place like CIA. But do I get it? I do not. Why most of the time I even have to type out my own reports, because they won't give me a typist. And log papers in and log them out again. They pay me for being a specialist, and then make me spend most of my time doing a clerk's work. That's a fine way to squander the taxpayer's dollar.

"And on top of that, as if that wasn't enough, they let this place be run by a bunch of ignoramuses who call themselves administrators and think they're efficiency experts. Either civil service hacks or Philadelphia lawyers, most of them. They know how to add and subtract, and that's about all. They try to reduce everything to numbers that they call production figures, and then gauge everything by statistics that are meaningless if not downright bogus. Like a kid, who'd rather have two shiny pennies than one quarter. If a man produced an Einstein's Theory, or wrote an Encyclopedia, it would just be one item produced so far as they're concerned.

The Administrator speaks:

who do the least work get paid the most. You take these poor devils who work for me. They don't get paid enough to keep body and soul together, but if they don't produce they get fired. I don't like to do it, but I'm paid to keep them at work and kick them out if they don't work. So I do it. A man who cashes a government check has just as much obligation to do what he's paid to do as a man who hires out to a farmer or works in a factory.

"Talk about the taxpayer's dollar! Why the government spends millions and millions of dollars to get all these reports in for the analysts to read, and what do they do with them? Just glance at them, and then stick most of them in a file cabinet. And the file cabinets are full already.

"You know how they spend their time? They come in in the morning and read the newspaper to see if it says something about the place they claim they know all about. Next they look at the new reports on their desk, and maybe read the one or two that interest them, and stuff the rest of them into the file. Then they go down to the cafeteria and have a cup of coffee. After that, if it's a nice day, they put on their hat and go over to the State Department to talk to somebody else who's interested in the same thing that they are. Or, if it's a rainy day, they go back to their desk or down to the Library to read up some background on the country they're interested in. It beats me why they have to spend so much time reading up background. They're supposed to know all about the background

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The Analyst speaks:

"It's a lucky thing for the country that there's a few patriotic fellows like me who are willing to do their best under conditions like these.

The Administrator speaks:

already, aren't they?

"It's a lucky thing for the country that not everybody is like those analysts - that there's still a few people like me who are willing to really do a job of work and never mind if their hands do get dirty.

2. All analysts, in all Offices, share the views ascribed to them above whether they're GS-5 girl college graduates or GS-18 Special Consultants on the Theory of Relativity. All administrators, whether GS-5 keypunch supervisors or GS-18 Special Consultants on Good Management Practices, agree with the administrator who speaks above. The trouble is that both are right. I find it impossible not to agree with both of them.

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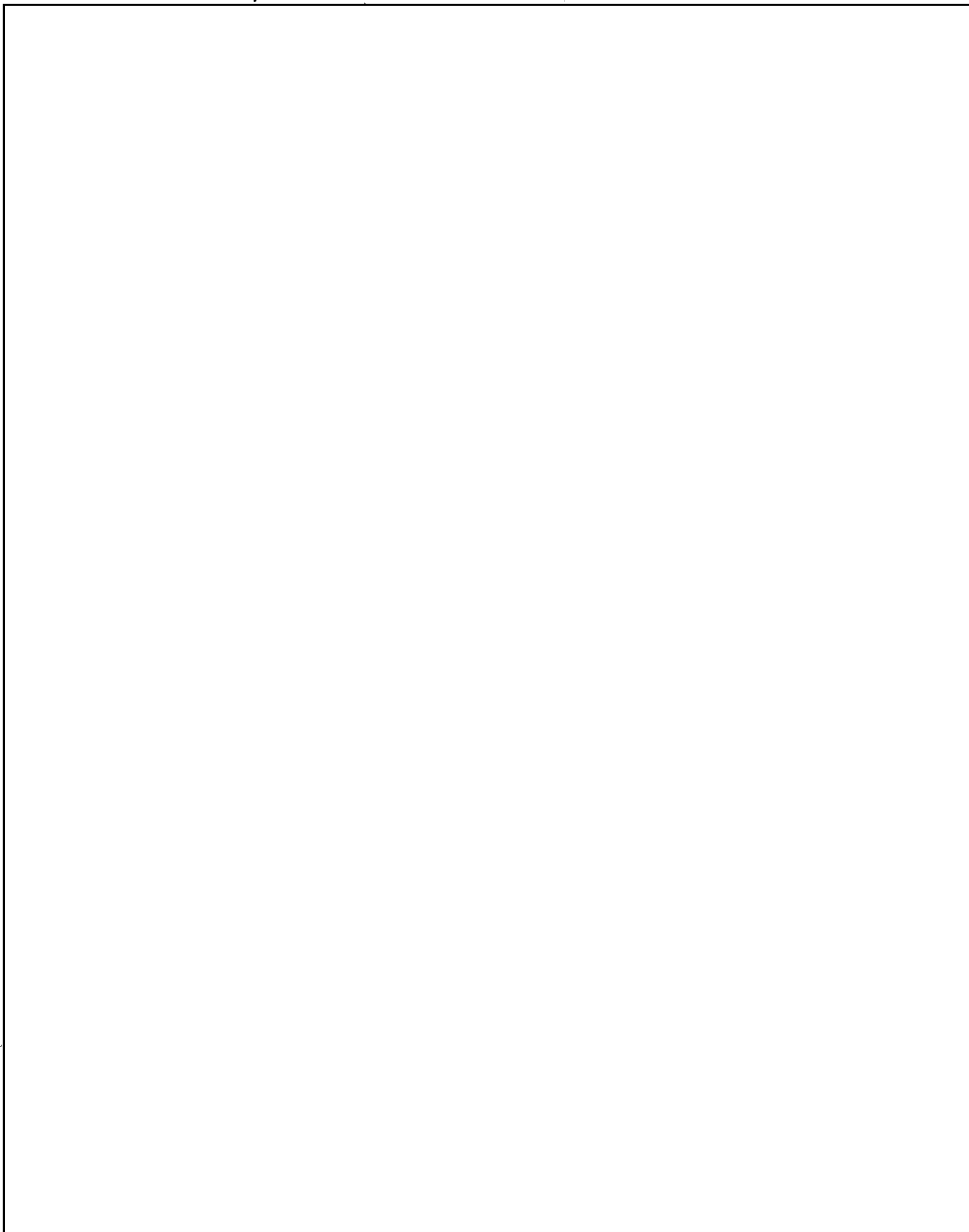
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Others: For the purposes of this memorandum, I interviewed most of the above individually and at length. My rough-typed notes on these interviews are available if you want them. They contain considerable comment on other personalities up and down the line.

3. Current Difficulties

Current difficulties in BR stem from the following facts:

(a) The workload is greater than the staff can carry. It is estimated that [redacted] names of individuals occur each month in the incoming documents and cables. BR may receive a request for biographic information on any one of these names. Yet it obviously cannot process any such quantity of names.

(b) [redacted] worked out a scheme which they felt certain would allow a larger proportion of these names to receive minimal processing. The scheme is a good one, but it requires that all hands devote at least several hours a day to very routine and arduous work which is more clerical than analytical in nature.

(c) When the scheme was first proposed, I recognized that analysts would resent it. Hence I forbade [redacted] to apply it to the Scientific Branch until it had been tried in the Regional Branch, and the bugs ironed out.

(d) The analysts' resentment was even keener than anticipated, and it was greatly magnified by the excessive zeal and speed with which

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[redacted] tried to impose the new procedure.

(e) At present the resentment is still keen, though the four Section Chiefs of Regional Branch concede that there is merit in the system. They feel that they, and not the Register's front office, should decide when, where, and to what extent it should be applied.

(f) We are now devising ways and means to pour oil on the troubled waters, to iron out the bugs, and to work out modifications which will satisfy the analysts and still take maximum advantage of the benefits which the new system does offer.

6. Alternate courses of action

25X1A9a a. To take abrupt administrative action of any sort would be a mistake. [redacted] Chief of the Regional Branch, has freely informed his Section Chiefs and analysts that he has complained about the new system, and about his seniors, to the Inspector General. All are in a pleasurable tizzy of excitement, expecting that axes will swing and administrators' heads will roll. If we gratify this expectation, the eternal controversy between analysts and administrators will be carried each month to the Inspector General's office. And it is not a controversy which can finally be solved. It can only be dealt with as tactfully as possible, and in terms of the personalities and specifics involved in each eruption.

b. To let the pot simmer down, as it is beginning to do, will be far better.

7. RECOMMENDATION

That we let the pot simmer down, and leave the working out of this particular controversy to OCD and the normal chain of command.

JAMES M. ANDREWS

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